

VA**U.S. Department
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News Release

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Washington, D.C. -- Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) Togo D. West, Jr. announced recipients of his annual award to recognize achievement in nursing care and support of nursing by medical center administrators. The awardees were honored for their exceptional contributions to quality VA health care during National Nurses Week, in a May 11, ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The 1999 recipients of the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing are:

- Linda B. Haas, R.N., of the Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle, WA
- Dorothy Huebener, R.N., of the St. Louis VA Medical Center
- Janis Cole, licensed practical nurse at the Jackson, Miss., VA Medical Center
- Lois Capers, nursing assistant at the New York Campus of VA New York Harbor Healthcare System

Richard Silver, director of the Tampa VA Medical Center, received the Secretary's Award for the Advancement of Nursing Programs.

Criteria for the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing include the recipient's integration of current standards of nursing practice into clinical care, meeting performance standards, interaction with co-workers to achieve appropriate care, and maintaining skills through continuing education and inquiry.

Nurses have been at the core of veterans health care since VA was organized nearly 70 years ago. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has one of the largest nursing staffs of any health-care system in the world. Numbering more than 55,000 nationwide, the VA nursing team -- composed of registered nurses, licensed practical, vocational nurses, and nursing assistants -- provides health care to the nation's veterans in hundreds of facilities throughout the country.